

TOWN OF NORTHFIELD, VERMONT
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
Minutes of August 25, 2015

- I. **ROLL CALL.** Chair John Quinn III, Selectmen Lynn Doney, Matthew Gadbois, Kenneth W. Goslant, and K. David Maxwell. Also present were Town Manager Jeffrey Schulz, Acting Clerk Kenneth McCann, Utility Superintendent Patrick DeMasi, Fire Chief Peter J. DeMasi, Assistant Fire Chief Tim Davis, Scott Benoir (Scotty B's Trucking), Robert M. Clark (Phelps Engineering), Lance Phelps (Phelps Engineering), Katrina DeMasi, and Kathleen Lott (*Northfield News*).

Chair Quinn called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

- II. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE.** The Board members and the public were asked to rise and recite the Pledge of Allegiance.

III. **PUBLIC HEARING**

- a. **Civil Ordinance for Solid Waste Collection Variable Rate Pricing.** The Notice of Public Hearing reads as follows:

The Northfield Board of Town Selectmen will hold a Public Hearing on Tuesday, August 25, 2015, at 7:00 p.m. in the Community Room located in the Brown Public Library (93 South Main Street) for the purpose of providing written or oral views on a proposed civil ordinance to establish variable rate pricing by volume or weight for municipal solid waste collections. As of July 1, 2015, Vermont's Universal Recycling Law requires that all solid waste haulers and solid waste collection facilities must establish a rate scale based upon the volume or weight of the waste collected. This ordinance would enforce this in Northfield by applying civil penalties to violators.

Chair Quinn asked if anyone present had any questions or comments. Scott Benoir is a local solid waste collector who owns and operates Scotty B's Trucking. He stated that the State of Vermont has been working with him in order to assist him in his efforts to comply with the new recycling laws. He has adjusted the prices of his drop-off and curbside collection services to reflect the new rules. Mr. Benoir noted that some special items, such as car batteries, paint, etc., still need to be delivered to specific collection locations authorized by the State. He will keep the Select Board apprised as additional recycling regulations come into effect. There being no other questions or comments, Chair Quinn closed the public hearing at 7:07 p.m.

- IV. **SET/ADJUST AGENDA.** Manager Schulz asked that a progress report on the water projects from Phelps Engineering be added under "Public Participation."

V. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (SCHEDULED):**

- a. **Robert M. Clark, Phelps Engineering: Water Projects Update.** Mr. Clark noted that John Kiernan had been the person from his company providing the Select Board with periodic reports on the status of the Central Street and King Street water projects. However, Mr. Kiernan recently left Phelps Engineering and Mr. Clark assumed his position. He then provided a brief report on his past work experience and qualifications, noting that he had worked on similar projects in several communities in southern Vermont. As there have been some negative comments (including some misinformation) circulated on social media and in the local newspaper regarding the Central Street project, Mr. Clark asked to be present tonight to address the issue. As of tonight, the Central Street project remains on schedule and the final costs are projected to be below the bond amount authorized by the voters. This includes both the installation of new water mains and the stormwater improvements. The work on the new sidewalks has been completed but some street paving remains to be done. The paving should be completed before the Labor Day weekend (as had been promised). In addition, the work done by the Courtland Construction Company has been fully inspected and found to be in compliance with the job specifications. Mr. Clark believes that the project has been done well. Even though it is unusual for a project of this scope, there has been only one change order and that was to request a slight change in project timing and not for additional funds.

Mr. Clark noted that many of the complaints have focused on the condition of the travel portion of Central Street during construction, especially the deep cut-outs at irregular intervals. He explained that the patch paving of the street always had been scheduled for the very end of the construction phase so that patches wouldn't be damaged by any subsequent work. Originally the patching was planned for mid-August but this had to be delayed by a couple weeks so that the work crew could be temporarily shifted to another project in another town. The project completion date had been set for September 14, 2015, so even with this slight delay, the project will be completed ahead of schedule.

Mr. Clark added that representatives from Phelps Engineering and Courtland Construction have been meeting monthly with Manager Schulz and Utility Superintendent Patrick DeMasi to provide project updates and receive feedback from the Town. In addition, any complaints from Central Street residents were taken into account and (whenever possible) appropriate actions taken as soon as possible. For example, after one resident complained about excessive dust being generated, actions were taken to alleviate the problem. He then asked if any of the Select Board members had any questions or comments.

Chair Quinn was overall very pleased with the work done on the project but added that if there had been one problem, it was a lack of regular communication with the Central Street residents. Mr. Clark took personal responsibility for that, agreeing that had there been more outreach in the beginning, there might not have been the subsequent misunderstandings about the new sidewalks, street paving, etc. Chair Quinn felt that the Town also shared some blame for this. It would have been good if there had been weekly project updates that could have been posted on the municipal website. Mr. Clark will bear this in mind for future projects he works on.

Selectman Goslant also believes that both Phelps Engineering and Courtland Construction did good work on this project. He noted that a lot of the construction at the beginning of the project was done so swiftly that some people received an incorrect perception of the actual project schedule. Selectman Goslant believes that if residents have any questions about this or any other local construction project, they first should contact the Town Manager for the actual facts rather than rely upon often erroneous second-hand accounts. Despite the numerous inconveniences they have dealt with this summer, when the project is complete Central Street residents will have new water mains and sidewalks and this should result in higher property values. Mr. Clark stated that when he did contact individual residents, most understood that the project's end result would be good for everyone on the street.

Mr. Clark then turned to the construction phase of the King Street Water Project, which started much later than on Central Street so much work remains to be done. However, despite some difficulties that arose due to the poor condition of the existing water mains, this project also looks to be completed on time and on budget. Selectman Goslant noted that there already is some pressure in the waterlines, which was not the case before. Mr. Clark noted that the Select Board did approve a change order for this project that will result in the entire street being repaved. This will be the final phase of the project and Mr. Clark will return to update the Select Board on this when the project nears completion. Chair Quinn and the other Select Board members thanked Mr. Clark for providing an accurate account of these important projects.

VI. DEPARTMENT HEAD REPORT

- a. **Fire Chief Peter J. DeMasi.** Chief DeMasi was asked by Manager Schulz to provide the Select Board members with preliminary information regarding the new fire truck that the department plans to purchase in the next fiscal year. The vehicle it will replace was purchased for \$225,000 about ten (10) years ago. Based upon inflation and other factors, Chief DeMasi believes that the ballpark figure for the new fire truck will be about \$380,000. (He recently saw one on sale for this price at a trade show.) As Northfield voters will need to authorize this purchase at the next Town Meeting (03/01/16), Chief DeMasi will research this further in order to get the most accurate figure possible for the warning article.

Should the purchase be authorized by the voters, Chair Quinn asked when the new vehicle would go into service. Chief DeMasi felt that given the need to finalize the specifications, prepare and advertise the RFP, etc., this probably would not be until early 2017. Selectman Doney asked which vehicle would be replaced. Chief DeMasi said it was the 1996 International, which would be sold using a broker with the understanding that it would remain here until the new truck is fully operational and ready for service. He will try to get a rough estimate of the old truck's potential sale value before the next budget meetings start.

Chief DeMasi added that calls for service usually are slow during the summer months but usually increase as fall and winter set in. There is good volunteer coverage at this time and he hopes to recruit some volunteers from the Norwich University student body in coming weeks. In addition, the Fire Department members are preparing for their annual fundraising activities over the Labor Day weekend, including the Saturday night Barbeque, the Labor Day Duck Race, and the weekend-long yard sale at the Fire Station. Selectman Gadbois noted that the Fire Station appears to have been painted recently. Chief DeMasi confirmed that Assistant Fire Chief Tim Davis did the work himself in order to restore the bright reds on the building, which had faded considerably. Chair Quinn and the other Board members then complimented Chief DeMasi and the firefighters for their excellent work for the Northfield community.

VII. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- a. **August 11, 2015 (Regular Meeting).** Motion by Selectman Maxwell, seconded by Selectman Goslant, to approve the minutes. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

VIII. APPROVAL OF BILLS

- a. **Warrant #05-16.** Motion by Selectman Gadbois, seconded by Selectman Goslant, to approve Warrant #05-16 in the amount of \$61,893.56. Selectman Doney asked about a purchase of bullet-proof vests for the Northfield Police Department (NPD). Manager Schulz stated that due to a successful grant application, the Town will be reimbursed for fifty percent (50%) of the cost. Chair Quinn noted that the warrant showed that road materials (i.e. road gravel, crushed stone, etc.) had been purchased from three (3) different vendors on this warrant. He asked why this happened. Manager Schulz will check on this. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
- b. **Approval of Bi-Weekly Payroll through August 16, 2015.** Motion by Selectman Gadbois, seconded by Selectman Goslant, to approve the bi-weekly payroll in the amount of \$86,459.91. Selectman Gadbois asked why the amount of NPD overtime was so high for this pay period. Manager Schulz said that he spoke to Police Chief James Dziobek on this matter and was told that it has been increasingly difficult to find part-time officers to fill shifts. Most have full-time jobs elsewhere. Manager Schulz has asked Chief Dziobek to make every effort to schedule swing shifts (with the extra officer) for the weekends, which usually see a higher call volume. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

IX. SELECT BOARD

- a. **Approval of Civil Ordinance for Solid Waste Collection Variable Rate Pricing.** Motion by Selectman Maxwell, seconded by Selectman Gadbois, to approve and sign the ordinance. Manager Schulz explained that the ordinance mandates that public and private solid waste collectors create fee schedules with variable rates based upon the weight and volume of the trash deposited. The intention is to reduce the amount of trash going to landfills by rewarding customers who separate out their recyclables from general trash (while punishing those who don't with higher costs). The Northfield Transfer Station already has this variable pricing in place but the State is requiring that all municipalities adopt this type of ordinance. Chair Quinn believes that this should not create a greater burden for the private haulers in Northfield as most seem to have already adopted variable fee schedules. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
- b. **Proposed Purchase of New Vehicle for Water/Sewer Departments.** Manager Schulz stated that the purchase of a new vehicle for the Water/Sewer Departments is in the current fiscal year's budget and is in compliance with the previously approved vehicle replacement schedule. The state bid price quoted by Shearer Chevrolet for the new vehicle is \$37,417. Since the purchase is budgeted, it does not require formal Select Board authorization but Manager Schulz wanted to inform the members of this intention in case there were any strong objections. Chair Quinn's only concern is that this dealership is located in South Burlington; this is a good distance to go if service work is needed. Superintendent DeMasi noted that the last time a similar vehicle was purchased, it was from a dealership based in New Hampshire. There always is a stipulation that a more local affiliated dealership will perform any warranty repairs. Selectman Gadbois asked if only one truck will be purchased at this time. Manager Schulz confirmed that although there is money budgeted to purchase two (2) vehicles, only one will be bought at this time. The other vehicle will be bought in a year or two. Selectman Goslant asked when Northfield Village went from a ten (10) to eight (8) year vehicle replacement schedule. Superintendent DeMasi said that this change developed over time as it was discovered that the Water/Sewer Departments work these vehicles so hard that they usually are in poor condition by the ninth (9th) year of service. There also is a much better resale value after seven (7) years. Selectman Gadbois asked if there were plans to purchase an extended warranty for the vehicle. Superintendent DeMasi said this would be Manager Schulz's decision. Chair Quinn would like this option priced out to see if it would be worth the extra cost. There appeared to be no objections to this purchase so the process will continue.
- c. **DRAFT Policy regarding Use of Economic Development Funds.** Manager Schulz stated that at the 2014 Town Meeting (03/04/14), Northfield voters authorized the "creation of a reserve fund in an amount not to exceed \$100,000 for the purpose of economic development." At that time, there was a public request that a policy be developed to specify how and when these funds would be spent. Manager Schulz has drafted such a policy that has been distributed to the Select Board members for their review. Chair Quinn stated that the draft answers the major concerns and he asked Manager Schulz to finalize it for formal Select Board approval.

X. BOARD MEMBERS' COMMENTS, CONCERNS, QUESTIONS

- a. **Cabot Hosiery Grant Application.** Selectman Gadbois asked about the status of Cabot Hosiery's grant application for state funds to facilitate its expansion plans. Manager Schulz has been in contact with the consultant that Cabot Hosiery hired to assist them with this and all appears to be on schedule. The State appears to be very encouraging of this sort of economic expansion as it would create a good number of local jobs. Selectman Gadbois asked if the Town has done all it can to help with this. Manager Schulz confirmed that it has to this point. However, should the expansion get the go-ahead from the State, the Select Board will need to authorize Cabot Hosiery's request to privatize (i.e. "throw up") some of the public road leading to the facility as well as some utility improvements. Superintendent Demasi added that Cabot Hosiery has been doing some of the preliminary utility work itself, including moving utility poles, etc. Selectman Maxwell stated that at the last Utility Commission meeting, it was reported that Cabot Hosiery recently learned that it may have overestimated the amount of additional power supply and infrastructure improvements needed for the planned expansion.
- b. **Proposed Purchase of Body Cameras for the Northfield Police Department, etc.** Chair Quinn noted Chief Dziobek's memorandum regarding his plan to use state grant funds to purchase eight (8) body cameras. This would provide one for each of the six (6) full-time officers and two (2) to be used by part-time officers. Chair Quinn thought it was a good idea to purchase body cameras but didn't see why there couldn't be more sharing amongst the officers. Manager Schulz asked Chief Dziobek about this and was told that it has become standard police department policy around the country to have separate cameras for each full-time officer so that there is no public perception that the footage generated is being manipulated, that some officers are being excluded from the process, etc. In addition, Chief Dziobek will develop a policy regarding the use of these body cameras, how the collected data will be stored, etc. before they are put into service. Chair Quinn believes that this is a good idea to have a policy on hand and felt it should include cost controls for equipment replacement, data storage expenses, etc.
- On a related note, since the Town pays for each officer to have his/her own uniform, Selectman Doney thought it would be a good idea for Chief Dziobek to wear his more often. He also asked when the Police Station garage doors will be repaired. Manager Schulz will check into this. Selectman Goslant wondered if the Select Board would ever get a straight answer on how a radiator on one of the NPD cruisers was damaged. Manager Schulz will work on this as well.

XI. TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT. Manager Schulz had nothing to add to his written report.

XII. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (UNSCHEDULED). There was none.

XIII. ADJOURNMENT. Motion by Selectman Maxwell, seconded by Selectman Goslant, to adjourn. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

The meeting adjourned at 8:24 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kenneth L. McCann

Kenneth L. McCann, Acting Clerk

An audio recording of this meeting is available in the Town Manager's Office.

These minutes were approved at the regular Select Board meeting of September 8, 2015.